

VZCZCXRO4820
PP RUEH DU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEH KI #1523 2721310
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 291310Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4885
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE

UNCLAS KINSHASA 001523

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [KDEM](#) [MARR](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: KABILA AND BEMBA AGREE ON MOVES TO REDUCE ARMS ON
THE STREETS IN KINSHASA

REF: KINSHASA 1427

¶1. (U) Negotiators for President Joseph Kabila and Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba signed an agreement September 23 aimed at reducing arms on the streets of Kinshasa and the risk of further confrontations between their armed forces. The agreement aims to calm tensions in the wake of the August 20-22 shootout between the two camps and to ensure peaceful conduct of the second round of presidential elections October 29. It commits them to work jointly with the Congolese national army (FARDC) and police, MONUC and EUFOR to this end.

¶2. (U) The agreement, signed by Guillaume Samba Kaputo for Kabila and Francois Muamba for Bemba, is composed of three sets of measures:

- o Individual: it permits armed men on streets only in fulfillment of official duties, including protection of officials or official residences, and mandates joint verification patrols including both Congolese and foreign forces.

- o Surveillance: it posts MONUC liaison detachments to Kinshasa garrisons of the Congolese army, Kabila's Presidential guard and Bemba's troops which will verify restriction to base of those forces during elections and be involved in any decision to deploy troops.

- o Confidence-building: it creates a permanent commission to verify any violations of the agreement, calm tensions and dissipate rumors, and envisions implementation of similar individual and surveillance measures in other areas of the country.

¶3. (U) The agreement received wide notice in national and international news reports, but does not yet appear to have been released publicly. News reports have focused on the much more general statements of an unsigned joint press statement released the same day and cleared with the CIAT ambassadors. None have focused on the issue of allowing for protection detachments without subjecting them to numerical limitations.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: This agreement follows the September call by the CIAT ambassadors for a reduction in violence in the wake of the events of August 20-22 (ref A) and a related September 22 UNSC Presidential Statement. We will continue to reiterate our commitment to support all efforts to preclude any further outbreaks, including agreements such as this between the two candidates, enforcement of media good conduct codes, and appropriate cautions to both about

resorting to arms or violence.

15. (SBU) Comment continued: A mixed commission meeting is to take place on October 2. Agenda items include removing arms from Kinshasa, proposals to end the permanent presence of Presidential Guard forces at airports across the DRC, agreeing to an electoral code of conduct, and working on a post - election agreement between the two presidential candidates. End comment.

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